

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

**MODULAR CABINETS AND
REPLACEABLE LAMINATE PANELS FOR A GAMING DEVICE**

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**MODULAR CABINETS AND
REPLACEABLE LAMINATE PANELS FOR A GAMING DEVICE**

5 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

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This application is related to the following commonly-owned co-
pending design and utility patent applications: "Display and Mask for a
Gaming Device," by _____, Serial No. _____, Attorney Docket
10 No. 0112300-453; "Display and Mask for a Gaming Device," Serial No.
_____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-454; "Display and Mask for a
Gaming Device," Serial No. 41, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-461;
"Player Interface and Tray for a Gaming Device," Serial No. _____,
Attorney Docket No. 0112300-146; "Tray for A Gaming Device," Serial No.
15 _____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-462; "Player Interface With
Bolster for a Gaming Device," Serial No. _____, Attorney Docket No.
0112300-463; "Plate for a Midsection of a Gaming Device," Serial No.
_____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-464; "Top Unit and Base for a
Gaming Device," Serial No. _____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-465;
20 "Base for a Top Unit of a Gaming Device," Serial No. _____, Attorney
Docket No. 0112300-490; "Translucent Monitor Masks, Substrate and
Apparatus for Removable Attachment to a Gaming Device Cabinet," Serial

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No. _____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-450; "Gaming Device," Serial

No. _____, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-500.

DESCRIPTION

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The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a modular construction with replaceable laminate panels and a method for manufacturing, modifying, changing and repairing such gaming devices.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Manufacturing gaming devices is an expensive and time intensive process. Currently, gaming devices are effectively custom designed to accommodate a particular gaming theme or scheme. While many similar parts are used for gaming devices such as player input devices or buttons and coin, token and bill acceptors, the overall design or appearance of contemporary gaming device are somewhat dependant on the gaming theme or scheme. Obviously, such gaming devices cannot be built until the manufacturer determines the game theme and scheme. This includes determining the decorations such as the color of and other indicia on the outside of the gaming device viewable by the players.

One conventional process for assembling a gaming device includes attaching wood panels to a steel cabinet or laminating directly to the steel cabinet structure. The exterior surfaces of the wood panels are laminated or otherwise decorated. The wood panels are cut or otherwise made to fit
5 the cabinet, which is a time intensive and expensive process. These wood panels are difficult to work with, heavy, unwieldy and require a great deal of maneuvering to properly position the panels on the cabinet during the manufacturing process. Moreover, removing and replacing these panels is difficult. The wood panels cannot easily be removed in a gaming
10 area to change the gaming theme or scheme of a gaming device or exchange new panels for damaged or discolored panels. The attachment of laminate directly to the steel cabinet structure requires the lamination process to take place prior to any assembly. This process increases lead times because no work can be done until the laminate has been applied.

15 Removing such gaming devices from the gaming area to change the panels is prohibitively expensive for the gaming owners and disruptive to their patrons. Gaming device owners prefer to conduct such changes or make the repairs on the gaming floor, limiting the gaming device down time while at the same time not disrupting the patrons of adjacent devices.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a gaming device having a modular
5 cabinet construction and replaceable laminate panels which significantly
enhances the manufacturing, modification and repair processes for
gaming devices. In the preferred embodiment, the modular cabinet
includes upper and lower cabinets or housings removably connected
together and two replaceable laminate panels removably connected to the
10 opposite sides of the modular cabinets. The present invention also
contemplates a third laminate panel connected to the back of the gaming
device if desired by the manufacturer.

The first or display housing or cabinet is adapted to receive a
gaming device display and a removable monitor mask apparatus is
15 connected thereto. A plurality of differently sized display housings and
mask apparatuses are contemplated for use with a plurality of differently
sized displays. It is also contemplated that the display housing could be
sized to receive differently sized monitors. The second or component
housing is adapted to receive all of the other gaming device electronic
20 components and player interface and input devices. The component
housing can be of any suitable size or shape.

The replaceable laminate panels include a substrate and a laminate on the outer or exterior side of the substrate. Preferably, the substrate is extruded from aluminum or an aluminum alloy, although other suitable materials or methods of manufacture are contemplated. The laminate layer, preferably displaying the decorations, colors, figures, characters and indicia representing the gaming theme and scheme of the gaming device is applied to the exterior side of the substrate. The laminate layer is preferably a colored, pressure sensitive laminate comprised of vinyl, vinyl and metal composite, polyvinyl chloride, or some other mixture, applied to the outer surface of the substrates. The laminate panels are relatively simple and inexpensive to fabricate, light in weight, thin, yet strong and resistant to abuse. Suitable fastening devices are used to removably attach the laminate panels to the cabinets.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a gaming device having a modular construction and replaceable laminate panels that are configured to look as if they were installed in a conventional manner.

A further object of the present invention is to provide modular cabinets for use with a gaming device.

A further object of the present invention to provide a gaming device with replaceable laminate panels.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention having a modular construction and laminate side panels;

Fig. 2 is a side elevational view of the gaming device of Fig. 1, illustrating the laminate panel on one side of the gaming device;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of a gaming device of the present invention having a larger display cabinet and larger laminate side panels;

Fig. 4 is a side elevational view of the gaming device of Fig. 3 illustrating the larger laminate panels;

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of the display and component cabinets of one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of a laminate panel of one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the laminate panel of Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 is an exploded front view of the display cabinet, component cabinet and laminate panels of one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 9 is an exploded front perspective view of a display cabinet, a substrate, an inner mask and an outer mask which are attached to the display cabinet of one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 10 is an exploded rear perspective view of the inner and outer masks of Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 is an enlarged sectional view of one embodiment of a locking bar of a locking mechanism for connecting the substrate and masks to the display cabinet;

Fig. 12 is a cross-sectional view of the locking mechanism in a locked or engaged position taken substantially along line XII - XII of Fig. 11; and

Fig. 13 is a cross-sectional view of the locking mechanism of Fig. 11 in an unlocked or disengaged position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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The present invention is adapted to facilitate the manufacture, modification and repair of gaming devices of different sizes. Referring now to the drawings, and particularly to Figs. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7, one embodiment of the gaming device 10a of the present invention includes a

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display or first cabinet or housing 12 which is adapted to receive a display 14 (shown in Fig. 1 with a display and in Figs. 5 without a display) and a component or second cabinet or housing 16 adapted to receive all of the other components (not shown) of the gaming device. Such components include the gaming device electronic components or controls (such as the CPU, RAM, ROM, power supply and sound card), player interfaces (such as a coin slot, a bill acceptor, a reader or validator for credit cards or debit cards, a player card reader), player input devices (such as a keypad, a play button, a bet display, a bet one button, a cashout button), a coin hopper or payout tray, a ticket printer (thermal or impact), smart card read/write dispenser, vacuum fluorescent display and speakers. All of the components of the gaming device 10a except the display 14 are mounted in or connected to the component cabinet 16 to facilitate independent manufacture of the component cabinet 16 (without dependence on the game theme or scheme). This enhances the overall manufacturing process for gaming devices.

The display is preferably adapted to display the primary or base game as well as any secondary or bonus games to the player. The display may be any monitor (with or without a touch screen), cathode ray tube ("CRTs"), high resolution flat panel LCDs, projection type LCDs, plasma displays, field emission displays, digital micromirror displays, LCD touchscreens, flat TV displays or other suitable display device. The

display is adapted to display images, symbols, video, and graphics associated with the game to the player as well as system menus and diagnostics to technicians and machine operators or attendants.

Side panels 52 and 54 are respectively adapted to be attached to
5 each side of the display and component cabinets. Although not shown, a back panel may also be attached to the back of the display and component cabinets. As described below, each side panel is decorated in accordance with the theme of the gaming device. The side panels are preferably laminated and are manufactured and attached to the cabinets
10 after the gaming device theme or scheme is finalized. This construction for a gaming device, wherein all of the components of the device are in the component cabinet 16, the monitor 14 is in the display cabinet 12 and the laminate panels 52 and 54 are attached to both sides of the cabinet facilitate ease of manufacture of the gaming device and also facilitates
15 modification and replacement and repair of the gaming device 10. The present invention therefore increases efficiency and the rate of production of gaming devices and facilitates manufacturing line balancing.

For instance, if it is desired to have a larger sized monitor in the gaming device, the monitor could be replaced and positioned in the
20 display cabinet if there is sufficient room in the display cabinet for the monitor. Different support mechanisms may be used for different sized monitors in the display cabinet. On the other hand, if a larger sized

monitor, such as a 27 inch monitor, is desired to be placed with the gaming device, a larger display cabinet may be used. The display cabinet will be suitably attached to the component cabinet and the suitably sized laminate panels will be attached to both sides of the system and display cabinets. As further illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4, a larger sized monitor 14B may thus be used with the same component cabinet. Thus, even in a gaming area, such as a casino, the construction of the gaming device may easily be changed by removing the laminate panels, removing the display from the display cabinet, changing the display cabinet, inserting a new display into the display cabinet, and replacing the laminate panels with larger laminate panels adapted to engage the larger display cabinet. The only electrical connections are between the system component and the new monitor and any subsidiary equipment and connections going through the display area to the optional top box display or external signage. All of the other components remain unchanged in the component cabinet. As illustrated in Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, the indicia 15a on the panel 52 (Figs. 1 and 2) is different than the indicia 15b on panel 52 (Figs. 3 and 4).

As discussed below, it should also be appreciated that the laminate panels could be formed in two or more sections, as illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4, whereby the lower laminate panel remains connected to the component cabinet and a new laminate panel is attached to the new display cabinet. It should therefore be appreciated that a more systematic

construction of gaming devices can be accomplished using the present invention, whereby the component cabinets and the display cabinets are constructed individually and assembled as needed, based on the requirements of each gaming device. Additionally, the laminate panels
5 can be decorated or formed with any suitable indicia to correspond to the theme of the gaming device. Therefore, the manufacturing, modification and repair of gaming devices is substantially improved utilizing the present invention.

In the illustrated embodiment, the display housing 12 includes
10 spaced-apart top and bottom walls 30 and 32, respectively, connected to spaced-apart side walls 34 and 36, respectively, all of which in turn are connected to back wall 38. The top, bottom, side and back walls 30, 32, 34, 36 and 38 define chamber 39. Further, in the illustrated embodiment, the component housing 16, includes spaced apart top and bottom walls 40
15 and 42, respectively, connected to spaced apart side walls 44 and 46, respectively, all of which are, in turn, connected to back wall 48. The top, bottom, side and back walls 40, 42, 44, 46 and 48, define chamber 49 in the component cabinet or housing 16. Each of the cabinets or housings 12 and 16 is preferably made of rolled steel, although other suitable
20 materials may be used to form the cabinets.

It should be appreciated that the first and second housings 12 and 16 are removably connected together using any suitable fastening device,

such as screws, bolts, pegs, hooks, or other suitable locking mechanisms.

In one preferred embodiment, the housings 12 and 16 are removably connected together using a plurality of two piece mounting bolts (not

shown) such as a sex bolt. The female portion of the bolt contains a

5 hollow cylindrical shaft with threading on an interior surface adapted to

receive the threading defined on the exterior of a solid cylindrical shaft of

the male portion. In the illustrated embodiment, the first and second

housings 12 and 16 define one or more apertures 50 adapted to receive

the male and female bolts (not shown).

10 In the illustrated embodiment, the display housing 12 is adapted to

receive a display 14 and has a generally square shape when viewed from

the front or the side. It should be appreciated that housing 12 could have

any suitable shape depending on the theme and scheme of the gaming

device and the size and shape of the display. A plurality of different sized

15 housings are contemplated for use with a plurality of different sized

displays. For example, one embodiment of the display housing 12 for

gaming device 10a could be used with a 18 inch monitor (best viewed in

Fig. 1), a second embodiment of the housing 12 for gaming device 10b

could be used with a 27 inch monitor 14b (best viewed in Fig. 3). Gaming

20 devices 10a and 10b and displays 14a and 14b are generally collectively

referred to herein as gaming device 10 and display 14, respectively.

An alternative embodiment of display housing 12 is contemplated for use with the gaming device 10 of the present invention. In this embodiment, only one display housing is connected to the component housing, wherein the display housing 12 is suitably sized to accommodate
5 the largest display used with the gaming device 10 (in this discussion the 27 inch monitor although larger monitors are contemplated). In this embodiment, the first housing could include any suitable adjustable support or shelving unit (not shown) adapted to be used with different sized monitors. Here, the adjustable support or shelving, in conjunction
10 with the mask discussed in detail below, would be adjusted to accommodate the different sized monitor.

It is anticipated that the housings 12 and 16 define a plurality of openings therein, such as a vent aperture and at least one lock aperture. It should also be appreciated that the component housing 16 preferably
15 includes a door pivotally connected thereto (not shown) to enable the operator to access the gaming device components.

Turning now to Figs. 6, 7 and 8, the gaming device includes two laminate panels 52 and 54 which are removably connected to opposite sides of the display cabinet and the component cabinet, using any suitable
20 fastening mechanism, as discussed below. As mentioned above, the gaming device could also include a laminate panel (not shown) connected to the back of the gaming device. Each laminate panel includes a

substrate 60 and a decorative layer such as a laminate material 62 on the outer surface of the substrate 60. Preferably, the substrate 60 is formed from extruded aluminum or aluminum alloy, although other materials or methods are contemplated. In the illustrated embodiment, the front edge of the laminate has a slightly rounded appearance moving from the bottom edge to the top edge. It should be appreciated that other shapes and sizes are contemplated. It should also be appreciated that the laminate panels will look similar to traditional installation (laminate on wood or direct installation on cabinet substrate) and not have the appearance of a bolt on panel to the patron.

More specifically, each substrate 60 is formed with two opposing surfaces, a first (inner) and second (outer) surface 60a and 60b, respectively. The first surface 60a is generally flat and removably connects to the outside surface of the cabinets 12 and 16 of the gaming device 10 and specifically to the outside surfaces of the side walls 34, 44, 36 and 46, respectively. The second surface 60b is preferably flat or planar and is adapted to receive a decorative layer which is preferably a laminate or laminate material 62 thereon.

The decorative layer or laminate material 62 includes the colors, figures, characters and indicia representing the gaming theme and scheme. In the preferred embodiment, the laminate layer 62 is a colored, pressure sensitive laminate comprised of vinyl, vinyl and metal composite,

polyvinyl chloride, or some other mixture. While it is preferred that the laminate is a pressure sensitive material, it is contemplated that a separate adhesive (not shown) may be applied to the second or outer surface 60b and the laminate layer 62 applied or connected thereto. It is
5 further contemplated that the laminate may be applied to the substrate 60 in a powdered form. To change the look of the gaming device, the laminate panels may be easily removed and replaced.

In one embodiment, cabinets 12 and 16 define a plurality of openings 70 adapted to receive bolts secured to the substrate. More
10 specifically, in one embodiment, the head of a bolt portion is welded to the aluminum substrate 60 such that the cylindrical shaft 80 of the bolt extends transversely from the substrate towards the cabinets. Preferably, a plurality of bolts 80 are used to removably attach each laminate panel to the cabinets 12 and 16. It should be appreciated that the laminate panels
15 could be adapted to be attached to the cabinets in other suitable manners in accordance with the present invention. For instance, the laminate panels may be snapped into place or may include trim members which hold the laminate panels in place.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the laminate
20 panels are each formed in two or more pieces. Preferably, a suitable trim piece (not shown) is used to form a smooth transition between the panels. The different portions of the laminate panel may be adapted to

accommodate different laminate layers portraying the same or different colors, figures, characters or indicia.

The use of the laminate panels enables the present to provide a modular gaming device that does not look modular. Turning now to Figs.

5 9 and 10, the present invention also preferably provides a monitor cover 90 including at least mask apparatus 150 attached to the display cabinet such that the modular gaming device 10 does not look modular. The mask apparatus 150 preferably includes inner and outer masks or mask members 154 and 152, respectively, which are adapted to removably
10 engage a bracket or substrate 156 which is connected to the display cabinet 12 by a locking mechanism 158 adapted to removably engage the substrate 156 as described below.

This configuration provides for the complete removal of the monitor cover 90 (including the substrate 156 and masks 152 and 154) from the
15 display cabinet 12, facilitating the ease of manufacture, modification and repair of the gaming device 10. This configuration also enables old masks to be replaced with a new mask representing new games or effects on the gaming device 10.

The first or outer mask 152 includes a top or first member 160 and
20 a spaced-apart bottom or second member 162. In addition, the outer mask 152 includes spaced-apart side or third members 164 which are joined to and integral with the spaced apart top and bottom members 160

and 162. The outer mask 152 is preferably a single integral unit of a molded translucent plastic material. It should be appreciated that the outer mask 152 can be extruded, cut or manufactured in any conventional manner using plastic or any other suitable material such as acrylic, paperboard, glass, etc. The outer mask 152 is preferably formed as a single piece of clear or translucent material although colored or dyed material is also contemplated. While a single molded piece is preferred, it should be appreciated that the outer mask 152 could be formed from two or more pieces that are combined or otherwise joined to form an integral unit.

The outer mask 152 includes a curved upper edge 166 integral with and extending along the top or first member as illustrated in Fig. 8. A lip 168 connects to and extends transversely from the upper edge 166. Lip 168 is adapted to removably engage or connect to the display cabinet 12 (or a substrate 156 removably connected to the display cabinet 12).

Top and bottom members 160 and 162 of outer mask 152 include a locking mechanism for removably engaging or connecting to the inner mask 154. In one preferred embodiment, the locking mechanism includes a plurality of alternately spaced tabs 170 and notches 172. In the illustrated embodiment, a lip 174 extends transversely from outer mask 152, specifically from an inner surface 176 thereof, where tabs 170 and notches 172 are defined in an upper and lower portion thereof.

The inner mask 154 comprises spaced-apart top, bottom and side members 178, 180 and 182, respectively, similar to the outer mask 152 discussed previously. Like the outer mask 152, the inner mask 154 is preferably a single integral unit of a molded translucent plastic material although other manufacturing methods and materials are contemplated. Inner mask 154 is preferably formed as a single piece of clear or translucent material although colored or dyed material, or two or more pieces are also contemplated.

The inner mask 154 also includes a locking mechanism for removably connecting to the outer mask 152. In one preferred embodiment, inner mask 154 includes tabs 184 and notches 186 that are spaced in accordance with and co-act with the tabs 170 and notches 172 of the outer mask 152. Preferably, the tabs 184 and notches 186 of the inner mask 154 engage and connect to the corresponding notches 172 and tabs 170 of the outer mask 152 in a removable manner. In the illustrated embodiment, the tabs 184 extend laterally from the outer edges of the top and bottom members. It should be appreciated that the co-acting of the various tabs and notches properly align or position the two masks 152 and 154 with respect to each other, the display 14 and housing 12.

In the preferred embodiment, inner mask 154 includes two wings or members 188 extending from the spaced apart side members 182. A

plurality of extending spacers 190 are joined to and integral with the wings or members 188. The spacers 190 contact or engage the inner surface 192 of the outer mask 152 ensuring that the inner and outer masks 154 and 152 are properly spaced apart. In one embodiment, this spacing is used to accommodate one or more illumination devices or sources (not shown).

The inner mask 154 also includes a plurality of lugs 194 integral to and spaced about an inner surface thereof, preferably along the inner surface 196 of the side members 182. The lugs 194 are adapted to secure the inner mask 154 to the substrate 156 as discussed below.

The masks 152 and 154 are preferably different colors and may be back lit by one or more suitable illumination devices or sources (not shown) to provide a lighting effect around the display 14. The masks can be independently illuminated, simultaneously illuminated and illuminated in many desired combination or sequence. It should also be appreciated that the present invention contemplates the use of more than two monitor masks suitably connected to the substrate 156.

Gaming device 10 preferably includes a substrate or frame 156 that securely engages or connects to the housing 12 of the cabinet 60. Like the inner and outer masks 154 and 152 discussed previously, the frame or substrate 156 comprises spaced apart top, bottom and side members 198, 200 and 202 respectively as illustrated in Fig. 7. Frame or substrate 156

is preferably formed from cold-rolled steel. It should be appreciated that the substrate 156 can be extruded, cut or otherwise manufactured in any conventional manner using other suitable metal materials, plastic or any other suitable material. The frame or substrate 156 preferably has a
5 suitable decorative coating such as plating.

In one preferred embodiment, the present invention further includes one or more locking mechanisms for removably securing the inner and outer masks 154 and 152 to the display cabinet 12. The inner mask 154 includes a plurality of lugs 194 projecting from the inner surface 196 as
10 described previously. The frame or substrate 156 defines a plurality of indentations or hollows 204 in the spaced apart side members 202 that are spaced in accordance with and co-act with the lugs 194 of the inner mask 154. While the lugs 194 and indentations 204 are preferred, other means for removably connecting the inner mask 154 and frame or
15 substrate 156 are contemplated, including screws, hooks, double-sided tape, etc.

A locking mechanism 158 is used to removably secure the frame or substrate 156 to the display cabinet 12 as illustrated in Figs. 9 through 13. While preferably the locking mechanism 158 is connected to display
20 cabinet 12, it should be appreciated that the locking mechanism could be connected to display cabinet 12 in an alternative manner. In one preferred embodiment, frame or substrate 156 includes at least one but generally

two or more hooks 206 extending from inner edge 208 of the side members 202. In the illustrated embodiment, four hooks 206 extend generally transversely from the inner edge 208 of the side members 202. It should be appreciated that the hooks 206 are formed as part of and
5 integral with the frame or substrate 156 during the molding process. However it is also contemplated that the hooks 206 are formed as a separate integral unit of the same or different material as the frame or substrate 156 and connected thereto.

In the preferred embodiment, the locking mechanism 158 includes
10 at least one elongated portion and locking member joined to the housing 12 as illustrated. The locking mechanism 158 is adapted to removably connect the frame or substrate 156 to the display cabinet 12. In one preferred embodiment, the locking mechanism includes two elongated portions or slidable locking bars 210 located on either side of the display
15 aperture or chamber 39 of the cabinet 12, placed parallel to the sides of the gaming device (best viewed in Fig. 7). Each slideable locking bar 210 defines at least one, but preferably two, engaging slots 212 spaced in accordance with and co-acting with the hooks 206. Additionally, each
20 slidable locking bar 210 defines at least one but preferably two slots 214 that slideably secure the locking bar 210 to pegs or screws 216 extending from the cabinet 60, preferably from housing 62.

Each locking bar 210 includes a biasing device that biases the locking bars 210 in a locked position to prevent unwanted removal of the substrate 156. In the illustrated embodiment, the locking bar 210 includes a spring 218 having a first end 220 connected to a peg 222 on the locking
5 bar 210. A second end 224 of the spring 218 is connected to a peg 226 on the display cabinet 12 and adapted to bias the locking bar 210 towards the closed position. While a spring 218 and pegs 222 and 226 are preferred, it should be appreciated that any biasing device (i.e., a spring bar) is contemplated.

10 The locking mechanism 158 further includes a locking member that locks the locking bar 210 in the closed or locked position. In the illustrated embodiment, the locking mechanism includes a plunger 228 extending generally transversely from each of the locking bars 210. The cabinet 12 defines at least one, but preferably two seats or sockets (referred to as
15 first and second seats 230 and 232, respectively) that co-act with an engaging end 234 of the plungers 228. Preferably, each plunger 228 includes a spring (not shown) that biases the plunger 228 inwardly towards the seats 230 and 232 in a manner well known in the art.

In the closed position, the hooks 206 of frame or substrate 156 sit
20 in the engaging slots 212 and are engaged by the locking bar 210, so that at least a portion of the hooks 206 (i.e., at least the tip 236 and slot 238) engages, catches or hooks the locking bar 210. Moving the plunger 228

outwardly from the first seat 230 enables the locking bar 210 to slideably move towards the unlocked position, so that the sliding bar 210 no longer engages the hooks 206. The hooks 206 now sit freely in the engaging slots 212 and can be easily removed by pulling outwards on the frame or
5 substrate 156.

It should be appreciated that assembling the gaming device 10 using modular cabinet is a relatively straight forward and efficient process. The first and second housings 12 and 16 are connected together using a removable connecting device. The electric components are assembled
10 and positioned in housing 16, while the display 14 is positioned in housing 12. The locking mechanism 158 is connected to the cabinet, preferably to housing 12, prior to placing the display 14 therein and connecting it to the appropriate electrical component.

Generally, to construct a gaming device in accordance with the
15 present invention, the decorative or laminate layer 62 is prepared and applied or connected to the substrate 60 of the laminate panels 52 and 54. The laminate panels 52 and 54 are connected to the housings 12 and using a removable connecting mechanism. . Masks 152 and 154, and frame 156 are assembled and removably connected to the display cabinet
20 12, and preferably to locking mechanism 158 in display cabinet 12. A door is pivotally connected to the component cabinet 16.

It should be further appreciated that changing the gaming theme and scheme is likewise a relatively straightforward and efficient process. For example, a technician opens the door reaches under the frame 156 and pulls up on the plungers 228. Pulling up on the plungers 228 (i.e., away from the locking bar 210), disengages the plunger engaging ends 234 from the first socket 230. As the locking bar 210 is moved to the open position in the illustrated embodiment, the locking bar 210 slideably moves along the pegs or screws 216 until the plunger engaging end 234 engages the second seat 232. The locking bar 210 no longer engages the hooks 206, which may now be removed from engaging slot 212. The masks and frame may be removed from the cabinet 12, and display 14 may now be removed from chamber 39.

The technician unlocks and opens the door pivotally connected to cabinet 16. The technician may now unfasten nuts 81 from the bolts 80 connecting the panels 52 and 54 to the cabinets 12 and 16, to remove the panels 52 and 54. The technician may access the components to update the gaming scheme (i.e., replace a chip, insert new code, etc.). If necessary, a new, differently sized display housing may be placed on housing 16 and removably connected thereto using bolts. The newly sized display is placed in chamber 39 of the new display housing and connected to the electrical components contained in component housing 16. It should be appreciated that if the same sized monitor is to be used,

the display housing 12 need not be replaced. New laminate panels are positioned so that the shafts 80 are received in the apertures 70 of the cabinets. The new laminate panels are then securely connected to cabinets 12 and 16.

5 If necessary, new masks 152 and 154 and a frame 156 is replaced so that the hooks 206 engage the engaging slots 212. The plungers 228 are again pulled up so that the plunger engaging ends 234 disengage the second seat 232. The sliding bar 210 is moved back manually (or biased by the spring) to the locked position so that the locking bar 210 engages
10 the hooks 206 and the plunger engaging ends 234 engage the first seats 230. The door is the closed.

 While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the
15 disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this
20 application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.